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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

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March 28

WILLIAM H. SEWARD;

AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE

AUBURN AND OWASCO CANAL,

OCTOBER 14, 1835:

WITH THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CELEBRATION.

AUBURN:

PUBLISHED BY H. IVISON & CO.

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1835.

At a meeting of the President and Directors of the AUBURN AND OWASCO CANAL COMPANY, September 28th, 1835—

RESOLVED, That the Corner Stone of the Dam to be erected for continuing the navigation of the Owasco Lake into the Village of Auburn, be laid, on Wednesday, the fourteenth day of October next. at 12 o'clock, at noon; and that Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, be requested in the name of this Company, to deliver an Address on the occasion.
GEO. H. WOOD, Secretary.

At a meeting of the Joint Committee of Arrangements for the celebration of the commencement of the Auburn and Owasco Canal, held October 15th, 1835—

RESOLVED, That a copy of the Address of Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, delivered on the fourteenth inst. be requested in behalf of this Committee, for publication.

By order of the Committee,

S. A. GOODWIN, Secretary.

A D D R E S S .

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
AUBURN AND OWASCO CANAL COMPANY:—

I CONGRATULATE you, who have embarked a portion of your private fortunes in this enterprise, so intimately connected with the prosperity of this village and this county, upon the sympathy of your fellow-citizens, manifested by their numerous attendance on this occasion. I am sure I may assume to be their organ; to express their unanimous and earnest desire, that the success of your undertaking may be such, as to richly reward your patriotic exertions; and to pronounce, in their name, that, whatever shall be the result in that respect, you will be entitled to the gratitude which an intelligent community awards to public benefactors.

FELLOW-CITIZENS:—It is now ten years since a general conviction obtained among us, that the interests of this village required a navigable communication to be made, to connect it with the Owasco lake. The work, which is feasible, and requires inconsiderable expenditure, so far as natural obstacles are concerned, has been thus long delayed, for the reason that the lands through which the canal must pass had become subdivided in the possession of many proprietors, who set a high value upon them, and that extensive and valuable mills and manufactories had been erected and were in the enjoyment of the water of the river for hydraulic purposes. In order to effect the construction of the canal, the titles of the proprietors of these lands, mills and manufactories were to be acquired. *The Auburn and Owasco Canal Company*, consisting of sixteen citizens of this village, was organized on the first day of June last, with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars. They have already invested of that sum about seventy thousand dollars, in the purchase of the

before mentioned lands, erections and hydraulic privileges ; and this day has been set apart by them for commencing the construction of the canal. The plan of the work is as simple as it is bold. On this spot a dam will be erected thirty-eight feet in height, which will in effect extend the surface of the lake to this place, a distance of two and a half miles from the present outlet of its waters. The channel of the natural outlet will be improved so as to have at all seasons depth sufficient for steam navigation. A navigable canal will be made, eighty-one rods long, from this dam to a basin and reservoir on the east side of Mechanic street, and the surplus water, there 40 feet higher than the surface of the stream below, will then be discharged into the river, as required for hydraulic power over wheels of 30 feet diameter.

Thus the whole work will be completed without any lock except guard locks. The waters retained by this dam, and those in the canal, and in the reservoir, will be ample for the purposes of steam navigation, for the hydraulic power required in mills and manufactories to be erected on every part of the plain below, and for supplying the inhabitants of the village of Auburn for all domestic uses, and for fires. This plain statement of the plan and objects of the AUBURN AND OWASCO CANAL is sufficient to show that the day of its commencement is not without cause regarded as a day of general festivity among us.

The mind, on such occasions, delights in looking back through the career that has been accomplished, and in comparing the past with the present, and its anticipations of the future. In this instance, fellow-citizens, ours is a brief retrospect ; and is embraced within the memory of many who are present. Within their recollection, the surface of this beautiful lake reflected the shade of an unbroken forest. The emigrant to the 'Genesee country,' hastened to ford, before night-fall, the treacherous current which flowed between these banks. Indians were then the occupants of the territory lying between the Owasco and Cayuga lakes. Of those native proprietors of this territory there is now no memorial left here, except the names which those lakes and our county bear, and the ruins of a fortification on an eminence within our view. Who, among the adventurous emigrants, then believed, that, within so short a period, the shores of those lakes would be crowned with an universal harvest ? that the

waters of this river would be exhausted in mills and manufactories, and that on the plain that surrounds the ruins of that fortification, there would be a town of 5000 inhabitants, with its churches, its printing-offices, academies and seminaries of science and religion?

So steadily onward is the march of improvement, in a country where the people are enlightened and the government equal and just, that this change has occurred almost without consciousness that it was going forward, on the part of the actors by whom it has been effected. But we ought not, for that reason, to omit to render the honor due to them while participating in the fruits of their toils and sacrifices.

The work we this day commence is by no means unworthy of the interest which these proceedings express: But it must be admitted that the lamented Colonel HARDENBERGH exhibited a bolder spirit than ours in the erection of his humble mills in the forest at yonder point. *His* was individual, solitary, self-denying, enterprise. *Ours* is a work of united effort, requiring only surplus capital, and unlike his, undertaken not to anticipate the probable wants, but to meet the actual exigencies of the country. I am sure, that none of my generous fellow-citizens will dissent, when I add that the venerated WILLIAM BOSTWICK and his respected coadjutor, HAKKALIAH BURT, evinced a higher sense of the value of religious education, by erecting the first Christian Church at *Hardenbergh's Corners*,* than we have done, who of our abundance have since established at *Auburn* so many more costly and splendid houses of public worship.

While I pay the acknowledgment justly due to those who, at a comparatively later period, endowed our Theological Seminary, it would be doing a wrong to the memory of the dead, were I to leave unnoticed the munificent donation bestowed upon our Academy by the lamented ROBERT DILL. It would be a grateful duty to pursue this subject, and to pay the tribute eminently due to others of our citizens, the monuments of whose enterprise and liberality are around us, if it were not too delicate to be prolonged, surrounded as I am by the survivors and the relatives of the deceased.

* The name of the first settlement at Auburn.

The population of Auburn, including the village and its immediate suburbs, as stated by the Marshal who has recently taken the census, is 5385. In this country, whose inhabitants are proverbially accustomed to seek, for their residences, locations favorable for their business occupations, the number of the population in a town or village is generally a good test of the extent of its productive operations. Adopting this test, Auburn is the eleventh among the cities and villages in the state, and second or third among the villages only. But we may without hesitation submit to a more rigid examination of our individual wealth, our business affairs, and the tone of public and private enterprise which prevails among us. We may appeal to the traveller, who rests here on his journey, to say, having reference to the number of our population, and the date of our settlement, where does he find more spacious and convenient hotels, more comfortable and tasteful dwellings, more numerous or splendid churches, more extensive well filled store-houses, more liberal and flourishing banking institutions, and more substantial roads. When we exhibit to him thirteen store-houses four stories in height, of hewn stone, and eighty brick and wooden dwellings, all now in progress of construction, we may ask what town of equal population exhibits more vigorous improvement? We may call his attention to our market to which are appropriated 20,000 dollars, to this canal constituting an investment of 100,000 dollars, and to the Auburn and Syracuse Rail Road with its capital of 400,000 dollars, all of which funds, with inconsiderable exceptions, have been subscribed by our own citizens, since the first of January last, and ask what other population of five thousand have manifested within the year a more efficient spirit of public enterprise? We may with peculiar satisfaction conduct him through our manufacturing establishments. For no where, in this or any country, will he find, in proportion to our population, a smaller number of rich men hoarding wealth, and a smaller number of poor men destitute of employment. No where in proportion to our population, are there a greater number of citizens engaged in more various productive pursuits. Besides the ordinary commercial business in imported commodities, there are annually sold at Auburn, goods and merchandise manufactured here, as appears by a statement made by a committee, as follows:

Cotton Goods, of the value of	\$53,000
Paper, of the value of	25,000
Steam Engines, of the value of	39,000
Machine Cards, of the value of	18,000
Brass Clocks, of the value of	20,000
Cabinet Ware, of the value of	45,000
Carriages, of the value of	15,000
Harness and Saddletrees, of the value of	40,000
Plating and Coach Lace, of the value of	8,000
Guns, of the value of	5,000
Joiners' Tools, of the value of	14,000
Carpets, of the value of	8,000
Combs, of the value of	18,000
Clothing, of the value of	150,000
Boots and Shoes, of the value of	34,000
Flour, of the value of	245,000
Threshing Machines, of the value of	17,000
Mill Stones, of the value of	15,000
Scythes, Hoes and Axes, of the value of	25,000
Hewn Stone, of the value of	20,000
Woollen Cloths, of the value of	25,000
Malt Liquors, of the value of	25,000
Looking Glasses, of the value of	5,000
Hats and Caps, of the value of	15,000
Tobacco and Snuff, of the value of	25,000
Copper, Tin and Sheet Iron, of the value of	40,000
Iron Castings, of the value of	20,000
Coopers' Ware, of the value of	70,000
Domestic Spirits, of the value of	53,000
Leather, of the value of	52,000
Bellows, Brushes, Morocco, &c. of the value of	50,000

and other manufactured articles too tedious to be enumerated,—Making an aggregate exceeding one million two hundred thousand dollars.

The market, in which these manufactured articles are vended, is, I apprehend, much more extended than is generally understood, even by ourselves. Large amounts are sent directly to New York, and the

residue find purchasers in the western part of the state, in Pennsylvania, Canada, and the western states. From this rapid glance at the number and occupations of our citizens, and the general aspect of the village, it is evident that it is signally prosperous. It is both pertinent to our subject and just to ourselves, to add that there is nothing factitious in the present condition of Auburn, nor has any forced effort ever been expended here. Whatever of wealth we possess has been acquired here. Our store houses and our dwellings have generally been erected separately, and as the respective proprietors found occasion to use, and the means to build them. The entire value of the real estate owned by non-residents is very small. With the exception of the funds expended by the state in the erection of the State Prison, and some liberal donations to the Theological Seminary, very inconsiderable investments have until recently been made by others than our own citizens. It has been universally believed abroad, and to a very considerable extent among ourselves, that, owing to our privation of facilities of transportation, we were continually approaching that crisis, when improvement must cease and a fearful reaction must ensue. While we have been unconsciously proving the fallacy of predictions of this sort, we have suffered much from the faith reposed in them at home and abroad. I could name several enterprising citizens, who have for this reason withdrawn, and invested, as they erroneously supposed in more favored locations, one half a million of capital accumulated here. We are all witnesses, that emigrants, from the eastern counties and other states, have paused here, and expressed their admiration, that a village so unfortunately located continued to flourish so long, and then passed on to some more inviting villages whose progress since that time has not kept pace with our own. It is but justice however to admit that we have profited in one material respect by the same prejudices. They have compelled us to be prudent and to rely upon our own resources : and the prudence and independence thus compelled, have imparted to our growth a measure of firmness, which has hitherto saved us from all such reactions as have often occurred in towns whose increase has been more rapid than ours. How valuable this advantage has been to us, may be inferred from the fact, that while no one among us has grown rich by what is commonly called speculation in lands, as

many persons have done elsewhere, so on the other hand none have been impoverished by the same hazard, and all have more or less participated in the general prosperity.

Thus far, my fellow-citizens, I have occupied safe ground. The past progress of our village is history ; its present condition is ascertained from statistical details, not more easily obtained than certain to be true. But the future—it is hazardous to explore it. I will not venture to predict what will be the extent of our population, or of our capital, or business, at any future period ; but I will advert to our resources and facilities, and leave it for reflecting men to determine how far prudence will justify the continuance of efforts, which hitherto have been crowned with such signal success. In the first place, it is to be observed, that while owing in part to causes before alluded to, and in part to the magnitude of the scale on which the village has hitherto been built, lands are very cheap here, the necessary materials for building a large village or city, are no where more abundant. I need but refer to the inexhaustible quarries of blue and grey limestone, (lying within our village limits,) of which our public edifices and store houses have been erected : and to the clay beds and mounds of sand and gravel lying also within our bounds ; and to add that, without any improvement of our facilities for transportation, we are within eight miles of the thoroughfare, on which a great portion of the lumber is carried, which supplies the New-York market. Nor is the cheapness of land and building materials an unimportant consideration. Such cheapness contributes to an increase of buildings ; increase of buildings makes low rents, low rents conduce to large profits, and large profits to invite competition. We enjoy a climate and atmosphere in which no pestilential disease has ever been known, and which is peculiarly free from epidemics. It would be an act of supererogation to dwell at length upon the quality of the soil of the region of country by which we are surrounded. No part of the country presents a more beautiful aspect, or enjoys a more productive soil, than the township of Scipio : and it is added with confidence, that, although that township, having been earliest settled, is more highly improved and embellished than others, there is no other township in the county which is not naturally as productive. We have the most profitable material

for renovating and preserving the fertility of our soil, in the inexhaustible quantities of gypsum on the shore of the Cayuga lake.

The construction of the work before us, will add to the facilities for building at Auburn, by opening an access to large quantities of lumber and fuel; and a further improvement which may be made to connect the Owasco lake and Ithaca, will make this village one of the passages for the southern lumber to the eastern market.

The extent of the region, for which Auburn is, and will be the most convenient market, is less understood than the quality of its soil. Hitherto that portion of territory has been limited or nearly so, by the boundaries of the county. These limits comprise a district of about fifty miles in length, and varying from twelve to twenty miles in width. But it is to be observed, that, owing to the great facility of access to the Cayuga lake on the west, to the canal on the north, and to the more direct route to the canal on the east, taken in connection with the deficiency (at a certain season of the year,) of our hydraulic power, and our want of a suitable connection with the Erie canal, far the greatest portion of the wheat, produced within the limits I have mentioned, has found a market distant from us, although the expenditure of its avails has been principally made here. Such is believed to be a fair statement of our position as a market town at this time.

In reference to the future business to be carried on here, it will be at once conceded, that we will retain, in the same extent we now enjoy it, the trade of the county within the limits I have described. And it will as readily be admitted, that, with the improved cultivation of the country, there will be a corresponding increase in the commercial and manufacturing operations of the village, although it is freely confessed, that, all other circumstances remaining the same, that increase could not be rapid, nor could it be extended beyond certain bounds. Here then come into the consideration of our resources, THE AUBURN AND OWASCO CANAL, and THE AUBURN AND SYRACUSE RAILROAD. The inquiry is one of very great importance to us, what effects will they produce upon the future prosperity of the village? The immense advance in the value of real estate, the accession to our population, and the large investments made; and improvements commenced and prosecuted since the last winter, when these stocks were subscribed, have proceeded upon the confidence

that those effects will be auspicious. It is our duty here to show that that confidence is not exaggerated. We confidently assert that these improvements will remove all the inconveniencies of our location; they will accelerate that march of improvement, which it has been admitted would otherwise be too slow; and will break down those barriers, which it has been confessed, would otherwise be insurmountable.

I have adverted to the existing deficiency of our hydraulic power. In order to understand the value of what hydraulic power we expect to gain by means of the canal, it is necessary to understand accurately the extent of what we now possess. It is therefore stated, that, during a period of about six weeks annually, the waters of this river are so low, owing to the shoals at the outlet of the Owasco lake, that there is not a full and constant supply for the mills and manufactories now in operation here. The inconvenience in this respect, under which we labor, 'hath this extent, no more.' Small as this privation, at first view, would seem to be, it has been a serious impediment to the growth of the village. Prudent men will not erect mills or manufactories, the operation of which is liable to be arrested annually for any period, unless the exigencies of the country are such, by reason of a general deficiency of hydraulic power, as to render their property sufficiently productive to compensate for the temporary inconvenience.

Such exigencies do not exist here, to an extent warranting any considerable increase in the number of our mills and manufactories with our present hydraulic power. The work, now to be constructed, will depress the bar at the outlet of the lake, two feet; and the dam to be erected here, will retain the additional quantity of water thus acquired, so that it may be used at the season when the deficiency now occurs, and will thus secure a perpetual supply of water for all possible purposes to which it may be desirable to apply it. The construction of this dam thirty eight feet in height, will enable us to use the water upon a wheel of thirty feet. The reservoir, is the Owasco lake, which covers an area of eleven square miles, or 306,662,400 square feet, and a depth of two feet on this extent of surface, gives 613,324,800 cubic feet. The amount which may be drawn off per minute is 4732 cubic feet, which added to the average flow of

the water now drawn from the lake, will make a constant supply of 12000 cubic feet per minute. This average power, it is demonstrated by accurate calculation, will be sufficient to keep in operation 50,000 spindles for making yarn of the fineness of No. 30, with all the requisite machinery for weaving the same, or 500,000 spindles for making yarn of the fineness of No. 200, with the requisite machinery for weaving as before. This average power will be equal to that of seven hundred horses, and sufficient to propel fifty run of mill stones.* It is to be remembered, that the hydraulic power, I have described, is only that portion which will belong to the Auburn and Owasco Canal Company; and that the same water may be used again eight times with ample head and fall, within a distance of one and a half miles from the site of this dam; and that the dams for that purpose are already erected, and mills and manufactories are now in operation connected with them.

I invite you now, fellow-citizens, to direct your view down this beautiful ravine, and see how admirably it is adapted to the erection of mills and manufactories, in its whole length from this point, through the distance I have mentioned. After this explanation, it may be assumed that from the completion of this work, the hydraulic power and facilities of this village will be, for all practical uses, unlimited.

To return to the consideration of the advantages in regard to transportation, to be derived from the Auburn and Owasco Canal, and the Auburn and Syracuse Railroad—we observe in the first place, that the canal will bring to us the wheat produced on the shores of the Owasco lake, and will extend our market nearly or quite as far south of the Owasco lake as its present limits are distant from us. That this effect will be produced, will be obvious from the consideration, that with our increased hydraulic power, and the facility of communication with the Erie canal by the railroad, this will be the most profitable place for manufacturing the wheat, and the cheapest route for transporting both wheat and flour to market. In like manner we will secure the wheat produced in that part of this

* For these data I am indebted to a report made to the Auburn and Owasco Canal Company, by that accomplished Engineer, Edwin F. Johnson, Esq.

county, south of this village, because the expense of transportation and tolls, will be less on this route than by the more circuitous passage through the Cayuga lake and the Seneca and Cayuga canal. It is equally certain that the railroad will secure to us a large amount of wheat produced along its route, because of the superior advantage of having it manufactured into flour, before it is sent to an eastern market. It is apparent that the railroad will, for all important purposes, afford us the advantages of a location on the Erie canal; while the Auburn and Owasco Canal will secure to us advantages peculiar to ourselves. I have thus far, fellow-citizens, considered these improvements as standing alone.

But there is a much more extended view to be taken. These improvements are not to remain isolated. We know that the interests of the city of New-York, if she would maintain her commercial superiority over the other Atlantic ports; that the interests of this state, if indeed she would retain the proud ascendancy of the "Empire State," require the construction of one, at least, or more thoroughfares by railroad, from lake Erie to the Hudson river. We know that, on this route, such railroad is now in successful operation, a distance of sixteen miles, from Albany to Schenectady. That within one year from this time, a further length of eighty miles will be completed from Schenectady to Utica. That the Auburn and Syracuse Railroad will, within the same year, add a further distance of twenty-five miles, making the whole distance one hundred and twenty-one miles, or about one-third of the whole route. We know, moreover, that the capital required to complete the entire work, only waits legislative permission, to be so applied by its owners, as to confer upon the people of this state a public boon greater than any which, except their independence and the Erie canal, have ever been, or ever can, be received by them. To doubt, under such circumstances, that the great work will be speedily completed, is to question, whether a free and enlightened people have the capacity to understand their interests, or the wisdom to adopt the proper measures to secure them. Local prejudices and sectional competition, combined with narrow views of public policy, may for a period, delay this important enterprise. But that period will be short. Experience has proved, that hitherto the people have comprehended

in due time the importance of similar measures, and carried them into effect.

With the certainty then, fellow-citizens, that the local improvements first alluded to, will be immediately completed, and that the more extended work, to which I have adverted, will not long be delayed ; and in the enjoyment of the resources and advantages of our position before enumerated, what will become of the inconveniences which have heretofore retarded our prosperity ? Where are the barriers which will obstruct the progress of our village ? We have a new and splendid prospect opening before us. We will then be distant from New-York a journey of only 20 hours ; we will then be upon a great thoroughfare, which will bring to us the produce and materials required for the operation of all our hydraulic power, while the limits of our market for vending our manufactures will be extended into the " far west." Our position in regard to the western part of the state is most central, our soil most fertile, our resources most abundant. Nor will the improvements which will operate to our advantage, be confined to those I have mentioned. The day is not, probably, ten years distant, when a railroad, passing through this village, will be made from lake Ontario on the north, to Ithaca, and thence by means of the Ithaca and Owego railroad, to intersect the Hudson and Erie railroad on the south. This work will make this village a depot in the great barter trade of coal, salt, iron and lumber, besides affording other important advantages and facilities for our commercial and manufacturing operations.

Fellow-citizens, I fear I have detained you too long with an argument abounding in statistical details. The result of the whole is submitted to you with great confidence, that we may anticipate a rapid and continued advance, until Auburn shall take an elevated rank among the inland cities of the Union.

But the occasion calls for some remarks of a more general character.

Whether we shall secure the advantages, which I have endeavored to prove are within our reach, will depend in no inconsiderable degree upon ourselves. To do so, requires enlarged and liberal principles in the transaction of business. It requires that we reprobate the cent-per-cent investment of money in usurious loans, most frequently

productive of ruin to the borrower, and of perplexity and dishonor to the lender. Liberal confidence must be reposed in the abundant resources of the country, and in the advantages of our location. That malicious and envious spirit must be discountenanced, which delights in the destruction of individual credit. That contracted spirit must be put down, which is jealous when foreign capital seeks investment among us, and its owners desire to participate in our prosperity. That bigoted spirit must be kept far from us, which would churlishly exclude from among us those whose religious or political faith does not accord with its own, which tolerates no diverging creed, as if the narrow way that leads to life, was a line of faith, and not of practice, and the seekers of that path were amenable to human tribunals, and not to their final Judge; and as if, in a government which rests upon free discussion of every principle of moral, social and religious action, individual opinion, must or ought to be subjected to arbitrary and despotic intolerance. Thus acting, the enterprise of our citizens will be called into vigorous action; and it is morally certain, that foreign capital, if liberally invited, will seek investment in those places where domestic capital is most liberally and profitably employed.

It is moreover necessary to cherish a liberal spirit, in regard to public improvements, in other parts of the state and of the country. And such a spirit is no less enlightened and just, than it is expedient for us to indulge it. I regret to say, that on this subject there has been, in my judgment, much error prevailing among us, and throughout the state. The eastern counties, while they have found the value of their land enhanced nearly two-fold, and their towns increased in nearly the same proportion, by means of the great increase of commerce effected by the construction of the Erie canal, have not yet altogether surmounted the jealousy with which they regarded the accomplishment of that great work. Finding that they are not, as they at first anticipated they would be, oppressed with taxation to defray the cost of its construction, many of their citizens now deem it just to impose upon the canal the expense of the support of the government, at the hazard of driving into other channels that very trade which makes it productive and invites their cupidity. The denial of the applications, at the last session of the legislature, for charters

for constructing railroads from Utica to Syracuse, and from Auburn to Rochester, was a part of the same policy, and proceeded upon the ground that railroads, parallel to the Erie canal, would have the effect, by diminishing the canal tolls, to reduce the revenue of the state. As if it were wise, just or magnanimous, for the state, because it had made thoroughfares, to refuse permission to its citizens, with their private funds, to make other thoroughfares to compete with itself in accommodating the public. So, also, a portion of our citizens have been opposed to the construction of the New-York and Erie railroad, through the southern counties, owing to the apprehension that it would depreciate the property in the northern counties ; and in retaliation, "the sequestered counties," as those are called which are on the route of the southern railroad, unite with the eastern counties to prevent the improvements required by us. Plausible pretexts are never wanted to cover the real odiousness of these sectional jealousies : and these may generally be resolved into a great and anxious concern for the safety of the state treasury. Now in my humble opinion, a state can no more wisely conduct its affairs, than by contributing to the internal improvement of the territory within its limits, a large proportion of its revenues and credits. Every such improvement developes new resources, adds to the capital, and commerce of the country, and increases the mass of taxable property on which the government ought, in order to secure full accountability to the people, always to rely for its support. Where individual enterprise and capital are sufficient to accomplish a desirable work, they ought to be at once called into exercise. Where they are incompetent, the state ought, in justice and sound policy, to contribute. And yet the very opposite of this is the doctrine maintained by many of our statesmen, who hold that the state ought to embark only in those improvements which will be immediately productive. But as such works will be made by citizens with private funds, it follows according to this principle, that the state ought never to make any improvements. With such men, there is an everlasting apprehension of an eternal public debt and eternal taxation. And yet if all the internal improvements, required to cross this state in every direction, at such intervals as to leave not a single sequestered county or town within its limits, were to be made at

once, the debt which would be created would not impair the public credit or retard the public prosperity a single year. The expenses of a single year of war would exceed the whole sum of such cost. Every year after their construction, would show the resources of the state so much increased, that a nominal tax would be sufficient to establish a sinking fund, ample for the redemption of the debt within one generation—if indeed it were just, that one generation should bear the entire expense of improvements destined to become more and more productive, while the government shall exist. To compare such appropriations to the heavy national debts incurred by monarchical governments in desolating and exterminating wars, is as unsound in politics, as to assimilate in agriculture the effects of invigorating rains to the sterility produced by the burning sun. The popular error on this subject unquestionably arises from an inability to understand the extent of the resources of this great country. It is forgotten, that besides the lands we cultivate, there is a territory of almost inconceivable dimensions lying on our borders, with an annual increase of strong and willing hands to reclaim and bring it into a productive condition. It is forgotten, that every five or six years brings a new state into this confederacy, with its fresh and fertile soil yielding most luxuriant burthens, while the older states are all the time increasing in wealth and prosperity. It is forgotten, that this is a government made for the reign of peace and humanity : That we have no wars, or rumors of wars, to render it necessary to maintain standing armies and navies to exhaust the productions of the soil. It is forgotten, that we have not, and with the favor of God never will have, any aristocracy, pensioners and placemen in church or state, to consume the substance of the people. It is forgotten, that we are daily demonstrating by our experience, the new and gratifying theory, that national poverty, as well as individual destitution, are not the decree of a harsh and offended Deity, but the fault of men, and therefore avoidable. All this is forgotten, and pitiful terrors of bankruptcy are derived from the history of nations, whose wealth is in the keeping of an inert, profligate aristocracy, and whose peasantry are ground to the earth with the burdens of centuries of wars, carried on to gratify the avarice, ambition and revenge of despots. It

is time, fellow-citizens, that we explode these prejudices, and rise to the sublime conviction, that Providence has spread around us an immense territory to improve—to cultivate it, and to make it the abode of peace, of science, and of liberty. When we shall have embraced this truth, and become imbued with its influence, we shall rejoice in every work which will improve the condition of any portion of the people, and which will add to the prosperity of any part of the country.

But I have been led farther into this interesting subject, than is, perhaps, altogether suitable to the occasion.

I am sure, fellow-citizens, that I should have discharged the responsibility imposed upon me, as unsatisfactorily to the enlightened board by whose invitation I address you, as it would be unworthily, were I to close this address without adverting to one other consideration of a character different from any which has been presented.

Splendid as will be the results of the work we this day commence, and bright as are the visions of national prosperity dawning upon us, it ought to be borne in mind, that those results and those prospects are not, and ought not to be the chief end of our exertions. While it is true that individual wealth and national prosperity tend to increase and multiply domestic enjoyments, and elevate and refine the social condition ; it is equally true, that the perpetuity of this Union under its existing form of government is, and ought to be, the object of the most persevering and watchful solicitude on the part of every American citizen : And it is as certainly true that neither the happiness of our people, nor the stability of our government depends on the length or number of our canals and railroads, or the individual or collective wealth of our citizens. On the other hand, wealth and prosperity have always served as the guides which introduced vice, luxury and corruption into republics. And luxury, vice and corruption, have subverted every republic which has preceded us, that had force enough in its uncorrupted state to resist foreign invasion. So closely are moral good and moral evil, political good and political evil associated in this probationary state. But in addition to the other eminent blessings, by which we are distinguished, our lot has been cast in an age and situation when we can change this tendency of wealth and prosperity, and convert

them into agents for the preservation and maintenance of the liberty we enjoy. We are under a fearful responsibility to posterity and to the friends of free government throughout the world, that the institutions established here, dearer to them than all the wealth of the ancient East and the modern West, shall not be subverted through our fault.

That responsibility can be discharged faithfully, successfully, triumphantly, by the education of the people. This great work it is practicable for us to accomplish : And herein is that great distinction in our lot over that of all preceding republics, and all other states. The improvements in the art of teaching, and in the books of instruction, favor this end ; the cheapness of printing favors this end ; the interest every citizen feels that himself and his children have in the government, favors this end ; and above all, the comparatively equal distribution of wealth, and the absolute equality of civil and political rights existing among us, enable us to bring all within the scope of a general system of education. There is one only obstacle to the work—and that is, the prevailing belief that it is already accomplished. Our orators, and some of our statesmen, point boastingly to the catalogues which show that almost every citizen can read and write, and thereupon unhesitatingly pronounce us the wisest and most enlightened of all the nations of the earth. We “lay this flattering unction to our souls,” and rest content. But it is a dangerous, it is an universal—God grant it do not prove, a fatal delusion. That the mass of the American people have been instructed to read and write, and that they make profitable use of those precious acquirements, I am as proud to declare as any citizen. But are the acquirements of reading and writing, KNOWLEDGE ? No, fellow-citizens, they are only the means of acquiring it ; and without some higher cultivation of the mind, the ability to read and write has a tendency almost as strong to acquire and disseminate error as truth. It prepares us to become the sport of demagogues, and the slaves of popular passion, caprice and excitement. Something more is wanting. It is necessary, if we would be qualified to discharge the duties of electors—that is to say, under our institutions, the duties of self-government, that our minds should be imbued with some of the principles of political economy, of the philosophy of

the human mind, of history, and above all, of moral and religious science. When the minds of all the people shall be thus instructed, it will be eminently and practically true, that "error of opinion may safely be tolerated, where reason is left free to combat it." Then it will be true, that "the voice of the people is the voice of God."

For this purpose, let me earnestly press upon the attention of my fellow-citizens, the importance of carrying into effect a law of the last legislature, providing for the establishment of small libraries in connection with the district schools. Those libraries may be the germ from which, after much cultivation, the fruits I have described as so important, may be gathered. For although the acquisition of knowledge is the labor, or the partial pursuit of a whole life, yet the desire, without which the acquisition is never made, must be developed in early years. Considered in this view, it is impossible to estimate the influence of these libraries, properly established, upon the future character of the people of this state. And let it be always remembered, that to elevate the standard of general education, and to extend its benefits, is the most important duty of the age in which we live. Better would it be for our successors, that the waters of Erie and Hudson had pursued their ancient passages to the ocean, strangers to each other, as they were before the towering intellect of CLINTON compelled them to be united: Better for them would it be, that the Atlantic cities were a forest, and the valley of the Mississippi had remained an inhospitable prairie, than that we should transmit to them, with the mighty improvements of this age, a subtle poison, which should undermine their social condition. We must make our improvements in the minds of the people keep progress with those of our territory, if we would preserve those institutions, without which, all the wealth and prosperity we can secure will only invite more rigorous and avaricious oppression, will only serve, by showing the height of our present elevation, to make more manifest the deplorable depth of our fall.

Perhaps, at some distant day, the curious searcher of antiquities, may find, in the ruins which sooner or later must cover this work like all other human inventions, the corner stone we are now to deposit in the earth, and studiously decipher the inscription it bears, as a memorial of a people whose career will have terminated, and over whose

memory, oblivion will have begun to draw her dark mantle. Then, when all the notoriety given to the proceedings of this day by an ephemeral press, and the scarcely less ephemeral memory of these thousand witnesses shall have passed away, we shall be judged, not by the improvements we made in our lakes or our rivers, our mountains or our valleys, nor yet by the wealth we accumulated, or the monuments we reared,—but we shall be judged by the indelible impression we shall have left upon the moral condition of our country. So far, my fellow-citizens, as our influence may go in forming the character of the age in which we live, let not the discovery of these relics recal the memory of a people, who acquired wealth without wisdom, and enjoyed the luxury that it brought, reckless of their responsibility to posterity and mankind ; but let it, rather, call forth a tribute of gratitude, the most valuable of all posthumous fame, to our memories, as men who employed the unparalleled prosperity that God had given them, in enlarging the base, and adding numerous and more splendid columns to the temple of CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

CELEBRATION OF THE COMMENCEMENT
OF THE
AUBURN AND OWASCO CANAL;

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1835.

THE celebration of the commencement of this work, which is designed to extend the navigation of the Owasco lake to the village of Auburn, to increase to an almost incalculable extent the hydraulic power of this village, and to supply its inhabitants with pure and wholesome water—was every way worthy of its importance, in reference to the advancement and prosperity of Auburn, and the adjacent country.

The weather was propitious, the day being one of the most beautiful of those peculiar to the American autumn.

At sunrise a national salute was fired by the Auburn Artillery Company—accompanied by the ringing of the village bells.

At 11 o'clock the village was filled with an immense concourse of citizens from the different towns in the county and the adjoining counties.

A procession was formed at 11 o'clock in front of the American Hotel, under the direction of Col. William Goodwin, as Marshall, assisted by Maj. R. P. Stow, and proceeded through Genesee street, and Mechanic's street, to the site of the dam, to be erected on the Owasco, under an escort composed of the Auburn Artillery company and the Auburn Guards, and Military officers in uniform, in the following order:—

Committee of Arrangements.

The President, Directors and Company of the Auburn and Owasco Canal Company, with their engineers.

The President, Directors and Company of the Auburn and Syracuse Railroad, with their engineers.

The President and Trustees of the village of Auburn.

The Mechanics' Association of Skaneateles, with their ensign and badges.

The Mechanics, Manufacturers and Millers of the village of Auburn, with their ensigns and badges of their respective trades and occupations.

This branch of the procession appeared with cars, elegantly and appropriately decorated, drawn by horses, and on which the mechanics were carrying on the labor of their respective trades.

The Blacksmiths were on the right, and had a forge in operation.

Next came the Brick-layers, busily engaged in constructing a portable fire-place.

Then the Stone cutters, preparing stone for the dam of the Auburn & Owasco Canal.

The Carpenters and Joiners, who were employed in making window sash.

The Painters and Glaziers, who were giving a finish to some beautiful Venetian window blinds.

The Cabinet Makers, with a rich display of their beautiful ware.

The Chairmakers, who had chairs in every part of the process of construction.

The Printers, were striking off and distributing to the people, the following Ode, written for the occasion :

HAIL ENTERPRISE ! whose rising sun
This day beams forth its light
The Union's "loveliest village" on,
Where all her patriot sons, as one,
To greet thy dawn, unite.

Well may thy citizens agree,
With joy, to celebrate the hour
In which is turn'd the magic key,
That opens, AUBURN ! unto thee,
The secret sources of thy power.

Here join each Trade, Profession, Art,
Beneath the colors of the free,
With unity of thought and heart,
Renew'd impulses to impart
To Enterprise and Industry.

With happiness, and health, and peace,
By smiling heaven bless'd,
AUBURN ! may thy proud march ne'er cease,
Till by still prosperous increase
In wealth, in numbers, and in fame,
Thou earnest to thyself the name
OF FAIREST CITY OF THE WEST.

The Carriage Makers were very active in getting a fine coach ready for delivery.

The Wheelwrights were busily engaged in their occupation.

The Copper, Tin, and Sheet Iron Workers seemed to drive a profitable as well as brisk trade as they distributed their work among the crowd.

The Iron Founders had a portable furnace, and were very busy in making moulds, and the other work appertenant to their calling.

The Tobacconists were not only very active in making, but liberal in their distribution of Segars.

The Saddlers made a beautiful exhibition of their wares and workmanship.

We cannot detail the other exhibitions of our mechanics; but it is due to them to say, that their spirit and energy gave a great additional interest to the proceedings of the day.

And the Committee acknowledge with great pleasure the generous example of good feeling exhibited by the Skaneateles Mechanics' Association in joining in the procession, and trust that our citizens will lose no suitable occasion to reciprocate it.

The Fire Companies of the village of Auburn, with their engines.

The Young Men's Literary and Scientific Association of Auburn, with their badges.

The Clergy,
Citizens.

On arriving at the site of the dam, the banks of the river were found to be covered with a numerous and imposing assemblage of both sexes, convened to witness the solemnities.

Prayer was offered to the throne of grace by the Rev. William Lucas, of the Episcopal Church.

An address was delivered by the Hon. William H. Seward, which did equal honor to the speaker and the occasion—and was listened to with profound attention by his numerous and delighted auditory. Of the address we will not here speak further, as Mr. Seward has acceded to the request of the Committee of arrangements and consented to its publication.

The Hon. Rowland Day of Moravia, who attended in pursuance of an invitation by the committee of arrangements then read the following inscription upon a plate prepared to be deposited in the corner stone of the dam.

“THIS CORNER STONE OF THE AUBURN AND OWASCO CANAL, was laid October 14th, Anno Domini, 1835, and of American Independence the 60th.

*Directors of the Auburn and Owasco
Canal Company.*

John M. Sherwood,
Elijah Miller,
Henry Polhemus,
Amos Underwood,
William H. Seward,
George H. Wood,
Nelson Beardsley,
Nehemiah D. Carhart,
Henry Yates.

Trustees of the Village of Auburn.

Michael S. Myers,
John H. Chedell,
Bradley Tuttle,
Charles W. Pomeroy,
Jesse Millerd.

—
Population of Auburn, 5385.”

The plate was then deposited, and the corner stone was laid by the Hon. Rowland Day, during a discharge of cannon from both sides of the river.

The procession returned to the American Hotel, passing through Grover, South and William streets.

At two o'clock the company, consisting of about 200, sat down to a dinner prepared by Mr. Noyes in his best manner.

Hon. Elijah Miller presided, assisted by the Hon. Ulysses F. Doubleday, John Richardson and John Porter, Esquires.

The following toasts were drunk.

1st—The Auburn and Owasco Canal—We celebrate its commencement: The perfect work will crown us with honor and prosperity.

2d—The Village of Auburn—Blessed by a benignant Providence with a salubrious climate—Enterprise is developing her abundant resources, and marking her for future greatness.

3d—The State of New York—The magnificent scale of her great works of Internal Improvement proclaim the genius of her people. Onward be her march.

4th—The Auburn and Syracuse Railroad—A link in the great chain that is to connect the East and West, as they are already connected in feeling and interest.

5th—The President of the United States.

6th—The Governor of the State of New-York.

7th—The memory of Clinton—His name will go down to posterity blended with the prosperity and glory of New York.

By John Porter Esq. on behalf of the Committee of Arrangements :

THE HON. ROWLAND DAY.--We thank him for the kind manner with which he has complied with our invitation, and performed the ceremony of laying the Corner Stone. May the success of the enterprise make the recollection of this service grateful to his feelings.

By Mr. Day,--*The Citizens of Auburn.*—Their public spirit, enterprise and perseverance, entitle them to our respect and applause.

By Stephen A. Goodwin, Esq. in behalf of the Committee of Arrangements :

Our fellow citizen, William H. Seward.—May his eloquent address pronounced to-day awaken public attention to the capabilities of the loveliest village of the West.

Mr. Seward rose and said, That he had already drawn so largely upon the patience of the company to-day, that he would only on this occasion express his gratitude, for the flattering manner in which they had expressed their approbation of the humble effort he had made, to bring before the public the resources and advantages of the village, in whose prosperity they were all so deeply interested. Mr. S. said he would propose to them a sentiment, which he hoped would be considered as appropriate to the present period, and the feelings and interests excited on the present occasion :--

The Union of these States.--"It must be preserved."--Our prosperity began and will end with it.

8th—Education—The bulwark of our Republic. He deserves the best of the State who most contributes to its universal diffusion.

9th—The Legislature of New-York—Its first duty to protect and foster private enterprise; its wisest policy to advance the general prosperity of the State. Let it be ever ready to cherish rather than check the growing spirit of improvement.

10th—The Union of the States—The dread of despots—the last hope of freedom. Let him who would weaken its bands be stigmatized as disloyal to the people.

11th—The County of Cayuga—Second to none in the fertility of her soil, and the intelligence and integrity of her people.

12th—Liberty, and equality of political rights—Without them prosperity is but a pageant, and wealth but splendid bondage.

13th—The Cayuga Fair—“None better if as good.”

By Elijah Miller, Esq. *Western New-York*.—By the bounty of the State and the enterprise of her citizens, may her canals and railroads be multiplied in the ratio of her increasing population.

By John Porter, Esq. May the next great enterprise of the citizens of Auburn be cheered on by as enthusiastic an expression of public feeling as this day exhibits.

By John Richardson, Esq. *The Mechanics of Auburn*. May they always be as industrious as they have been to-day.

By George B. Throop, Esq.—Public Spirit—Promoting improvements in all, and excluding no quarter of our Village, comprehending the prosperity of each citizen, trade, class and profession of our population, as the direct means of increasing the wealth, importance and enlargement of Auburn.

By P. Bronson, Esq.—The dam of the Auburn and Owasco Canal Company—May it raise a fountain from which will flow liberal streams of profit to the company and of prosperity to the village.

By Sherman Beardsley, Esq. of Venice.—The town of Auburn—The surrounding country is willing to pay her honors.

By R. L. Smith, Esq.—The Owasco—Let us float upon her calm bosom and lave in her clear waters:

By Lyman Wilkinson.—Our own village—The centre of the State of New York—Her local advantages justly claim for her the distinction of CAPITOL.

By Geo. H. Wood.—The Farmers, Mechanics and Manufacturers—the bone and sinew of the nation.

By E. E. Marviné, Esq: Auburn in 1845—The key stone city of the State—with 20,000 inhabitants—a manufacturing revenue of \$4,000,000—a State House—two Colleges and no Poor House.

By Llewellyn Jones.—The Auburn and Owasco Canal Company and the Auburn and Syracuse Railroad—They have had a *fair start* in the race of enterprise—may they come out *neck and neck*.

By Nelson Beardsley, Esq.—Our guests from neighbouring towns and counties—Their attendance on this occasion evinces a liberal and magnanimous spirit which we ought not only to acknowledge but reciprocate.

By W. Lounsbury, Esq.—The Auburn and Owasco Canal and the Auburn and Syracuse Railroad—the main pillars of the future growth and prosperity of our village.

By John B. Dill.—The Auburn and Owasco Canal Company and the Auburn and Syracuse Railroad Company. Let them forever be united.

By Hugh McClallen.—The Cayuga County Bank—Liberal in its policy.

In the evening a ball was given at the Western Exchange which was attended by a large and brilliant party, and was got up by Mr. Curtis in a more splendid style than any ever given in this part of the state.

The Exchange was brilliantly illuminated, and the Ball-room was decorated in a most tasteful and imposing manner.

By order of the Committee of Arrangements.

H. POLHEMUS, Chairman.

S. A. GOODWIN, Secretary.